



POLICE DEPARTMENT

Kenneth J. Meuler
Chief of Police

February 1, 2008

Dear Members of the Committee on Homeland Security and State Preparedness:

I am writing in support of Assembly Bill 736. The Bill would provide a means for Public Works Departments to call for and to respond quickly to calls for mutual aid from their neighboring communities.

I have been in law enforcement for over 33 years in the State of Wisconsin, the last five as Chief of Police in the City of West Bend. During my career, police agencies I have worked for have both called for and responded to calls for mutual aid from other law enforcement agencies. The system of calling for mutual aid has worked well for police and firefighters around the state. During my career in law enforcement I have been at a number of accident scenes, crime scenes, or weather related incidents in which we worked closely with the Department of Public Works. There were a number of times when the safety of citizens and law enforcement personnel was compromised because of the lack of resources available from the local Department of Public Works. Clearly AB 736 would address this as it would allow local DPWs to quickly and efficiently call for help from surrounding communities.

I urge your committee to endorse and forward AB 736 to the full assembly for approval.

Sincerely,

Kenneth J. Meuler
Chief of Police

TESTIMONY ON AB 736

My name is Randi Wind Milsap and I am the Legal Counsel for the WI Department of Military Affairs and its Division of Emergency Management. With the impending winter storm warning involving most of Southern Wisconsin, inter-governmental cooperation is a critical component of emergency preparedness.

This bill promotes and encourages multi-jurisdictional collaboration between public works agencies at the city, village, town, county and tribal levels. Depending on the size of the municipality, a public works agency provides services and benefits to the public to include water, sewerage services, waste disposal, power and transportation.

This bill requires that the standards for public works agencies include a suggestion, not a mandate, that they adopt a mutual assistance agreement promoting inter-governmental cooperation of public works personnel and equipment during a multi-jurisdictional or multi-agency emergency response. The mutual assistance agreement will be created by the Wisconsin Division of Emergency Management.

The Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs supports AB 736. The promotion of intergovernmental cooperation between public works agencies will greatly enhance emergency response at multi-jurisdictional and multi-agency disasters and incidents.



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41ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

**AB 736: Public Works Mutual Aid Agreements
Testimony by State Representative Joan Ballweg
Before the Assembly Committee on
Homeland Security & State Preparedness
February 5, 2008**

Assembly Bill 736 is intended to promote cooperation between Public Works Departments from different jurisdictions when there is a large scale emergency that requires mutual aid.

In 2006, Sen. Robson and I worked together for a time on a Legislative Council Study Committee on Disaster Preparedness Planning. One of the topics that received considerable attention was mutual aid agreements used primarily by the fire service, and the possibility of expanding their use in the law enforcement community.

M.A.B.A.S., which stands for Mutual Aid Box Alarm System, was developed in the late 1960's, and is widely used by the fire service for incident management. This system is very prevalent amongst some of our border communities, and their neighbors to the south.

The idea behind AB 736 is to encourage similar agreements in the Public Works community. Wisconsin Emergency Management has worked on model language, so communities wishing to enter into these agreements have a blueprint to follow.

Sen. Robson was initially approached by the Director of Public Works for the City of Beloit. Obviously as a border community, there may be situations where a particular asset may be more readily available across the state line. This bill would allow for cross-jurisdictional cooperation, not just across state borders but between communities within Wisconsin.

There have been some recent incidents that I will let Sen. Robson tell you about, where her communities have responded to others requests for help as well. Plus, we are joined by some of the Public Works professionals that will benefit from these agreements, and they can explain why this legislation is important for them.

After Sen. Robson testifies, we would be happy to answer any questions.